DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 867 FL 020 556

AUTHOR Kishimoto, Toshiko
TITLE Teaching Business Japanese and Culture Using Authentic Materials: A Popular Television Drama.
PUB DATE 26 Mar 92
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions (11th, Ypsilanti, MI, March 26-28, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Business Communication; *Commercial Television; Communicative Competence (Languages); Course Descriptions; *Cultural Education; Drama; Higher Education; Instructional Materials; *Japanese; Second Language Instruction; *Second Languages; Uncommonly Taught Languages
IDENTIFIERS *Authentic Materials; Clemson University SC; *Japanese Culture

ABSTRACT

In a Japanese business communication course taught at Clemson University (South Carolina), Japanese television drama is used to help language students understand the style of Japanese communication and improve their communicative ability. The course design was based on the following: (1) research on Japanese perceptions of the language needs for good communication between foreign workers and their co-workers in Japan; (2) research on Japanese communicative behaviors; and (3) the values placed on the group, hierarchy, and harmony as expressed in the Japanese communicative style. Textbooks were not found to introduce or teach these cultural values because they are most often not expressed verbally. Commercially published audiovisual materials were seen as too unnatural in form and emphasis. A Japanese television drama focusing on business and containing English captions was selected because of its realistic and appropriate content and language, motivating value, and ease of comprehension. The 4.5-hour drama was divided into eight segments, and four strategies were used to study each of those segments. Strategies include presentation and use of vocabulary before viewing; summarizing in Japanese; detailed questioning and discussing; and special related projects. Sample exercises and a brief bibliography are presented. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Voght, G.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED348867

TEACHING BUSINESS JAPANESE AND CULTURE USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS: A POPULAR TELEVISION DRAMA

Eastern Michigan University
Eleventh Annual Conference
on Languages and Communications
For World Business and the Professions

March 26, 1992

Toshiko Kishimoto
Clemson University

FL 020 556

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1. Introduction

Clemson University has offered Japanese as a regular course since 1988, and its enrollment has increased by 200%. Japanese-track Language and International Trade will begin soon, thus more enrollment is expected especially from business majors. I have been developing effective teaching methods to meet the need of those students. This paper examines a method from several that I have tested in order to improve their communicative efficiency.

The survey which I conducted in Japan, indicates that "speaking in Japanese" is desirable for smooth human communication between foreign workers in Japan and their co-workers. I will not explain too much on this topic because the results of the survey will be published in the SEATJ proceedings 1992. Please note the tables in the last page of this paper.

It is very important for business Japanese courses to teach Japanese culture effectively and therefore improve their ability to communicate.

2. Japanese Communication Type

At Clemson, students who take 3rd year Japanese are often not good enough to comprehend actual conversation by natives. Their proficiency level is around "Intermediate-low" according to the ACTFL scale.

I used Japanese TV drama to help students understand the style of Japanese communication and to improve their communicative

ability. Neustupny (1989) listed the following as Japanese communicative behaviors.

1. to express one's respect strongly
2. to bow frequently
3. not to bluntly say "no".

Therefore, foreigners have to understand what Japanese want to say through the veil, and at the same time foreigners have to make special efforts to inform Japanese of their intentions effectively.

When we understand others, whether it is in the foreign language or in the mother tongue, we tend to use all the experiences and knowledge which we have obtained in the past (Rixon). Rixon's theory is proved by the fact that sometimes even fellow countrymen can't communicate to each other, but othertimes fellow foreigners can have a smooth conversation without any problems.

For better communication the learner has to know the Japanese Communication Style. Group emphasism, Hierarchical structure, and Harmony are the key values to understand Japanese and their society. We can observe the following types of communication based on those values.

1. A "we" rather than an "I" emphasis.
2. Communication greatly influenced by rank and positions of persons addressed.
3. At business meetings, Japanese usually do not challenge or question those having higher status,

therefore a non-argumentative communication style is used.

4. Extremely polite, considerate, sensitive also tends to be soft spoken, careful and censored in speaking.
5. Usually defers decisions to superiors when decision making is requested or called for at business meetings or negotiations.
6. Believes in allowing others to always "save face" in social and business interactions rather than confronting or embarrassing them.
7. Prefers not to interrupt someone who is speaking.
8. Avoids self-praising
9. Japanese communicators seem to leave much "unsaid" and implied or understated.

A text book will not introduce or teach those communication styles, mainly because they are closely related to the actual conversation scene. One of the most difficult aspects of the Japanese style of communication are the "unsaid" areas. Even though Japanese leave much "unsaid", they are implied and have no trouble understanding each other, sometimes even better than verbal communication.

Hence, non-natives who don't share the same values or experiences will have great difficulty following native communication.

3. Current Video Materials

In the past few years many video materials have been developed for beginning level learners as a visual aide. They seem to be too idealistic in wanting to learn language and culture at the same time.

1. It's easy to comprehend because they speak clearly.
2. It's easy to practice drills because they repeat the same pattern many times.
3. The explanation makes the grammar easy to follow.

However they are developed as a teaching material, therefore,

1. They speak almost unnaturally clear and slow.
2. Conversation is made for drill sake, therefore are unnatural.
3. Each scene is artificially made to introduce Japanese culture.
4. no natural flow
5. Grammar is more emphasized than the issue of the Japanese mind.

Better audio visual material which is closer to the reality should be developed and used for the intermediate to advanced students who want to improve their proficiency by learning the Japanese style of communication.

4. Using popular television drama

For my experiment teaching Japanese communication style, I have used the Japanese popular television drama called "Sogo-shosha" (the General Trading Company).

Because:

1. Students are interested in Japanese business, therefore they will watch the program with greater motivation.
2. Students can learn not only business practices but also Japanese culture and society in general as well as the Japanese mind. For example
   a. Human relationships at work
   b. Social etiquette (at bar, in an office, at home, visiting superiors, etc.)
   c. The close relationship between political and business circles.
   d. Family life
   e. The husband-wife relationship
   f. The life style of the young Japanese people.
3. Students can learn complicated Japanese speech level through various scenes.
   a. Hierarchy at work
   b. Hierarchy at home
   c. Between friends
4. Students can observe Japanese style body language.
5. The story is easy to follow because this type of business drama always treats the average educated Japanese, not a millionaire nor unique personality. Students can watch the drama closely comparing their own life.

6. Various aspects of today's Japan are introduced, therefore, students can broaden their knowledge.

This particular video has English captions. For the Intermediate-low students, the video with captions has the following advantages.

1. It's efficient in time because it's easy to follow the story.
2. Because students understand the story, they can listen to the whole Japanese conversation.
3. While enjoying the video students can compare it with their own culture.

According to Dunkel (1986) the listening activities should be divided into four strategies within three stages.

Stage 1...Before watching the video

strategy 1...predict the content

Stage 2...During the video

strategy 2...compare the prediction and actual scene.

strategy 3...Grasp the content

Stage 3...After watching the video

strategy 4...Compare your prediction to what happened.

Those activities will stimulate the learner's motivation and improve their language ability as a result.

My video class is also divided into the following four

strategies. The hour and half drama is edited into eight sections.

Step 1:

Vocabulary list as homework is provided for students prior to the class so that the students are prepared and able to predict the contents of the video program in class. Students are required to have memorized all the vocabularies from that section. Students are to say the meanings of each word and conduct a short Japanese conversation like;

T: What is KOKUMOTSU?

S: Grain.

T: What are they?

S: Corn, Wheat...

T: What is wheat in Japanese?

S: KOMUGI

(Conversation is done in Japanese)

Step 2:

After viewing each section, ask students to summarize the story in Japanese. Since the captions are provided, students should be able to understand the story. For the advanced students, captions should be covered for their listening practice. Each summary is discussed by the class, then the students are asked to write the summary of each section as homework in Japanese. Speaking and writing practices are emphasized at this step.

Step 3:

Ask students detailed questions and discuss the matter. Questions include the cultural matters, so at this step Japanese communication mode is to be discussed.

example: Why Mr. A didn't say "no" clearly at the meeting?

Step 4:

Special Activities.

1. Predict the development of the story and later compare the students' predictions. Different predictions will produce good cultural discussion. Students are allowed to use English to deepen their cultural understandings.
2. Research the specific aspects of Japanese culture such as:
    - Ringi system
    - Returnee's education
    - College students' job hunting (Japanese style recruiting)
    - Japan bashing
    - US-Japan trade conflict
    - Japanese and rice

    by using library and talking to Japanese people in the area.
3. Speech level study

    Watch the video several times to find how one person's speech style change according to whom he is talking.

Each students (or each group of students) are assigned to observe one character of the drama and report the result in the class. Students are also directed to observe the body language.

4. Show one scene and let students describe as much as they can. This practice provides each student more opportunity to speak.
5. Show the scene of silence and let students make their own dialogue. Students will learn the cultural difference between US and Japan.
6. After watching all sections let students describe what they learned about the Japanese business style from this television drama.

5. Conclusion

By examining the result of the survey regarding foreign businessmen in Japan, I found the necessity of teaching "Japanese communication style". As one of the effective methods, I developed a program using authentic materials, popular television drama. Since the content of the drama is about the average Japanese businessman's life, students learn various types of practical communication styles and broaden their interest in the Japanese culture in comparison with their own and of course they enjoy the drama itself.

For the students who have already studied basic grammar, popular television business drama seems to be the ideal material to learn Today's Japan, because those materials

include the current social and political topics that get the viewers attention.

The effective usage of this kind of drama will be highly beneficial for those who need to be immersed in Japanese culture to improve their communication ability.

The summary of the survey which was conducted in Japan in 1991.

PROFICIENCY LEVEL THAT JAPANESE COLLEAGUE EXPECT OF NON-NATIVE COLLEAGUE

	Japanese language ability	The problems that a non-native colleague faces
A 20 years in Japan	Speaking: to entertain customers to communicate on job site to inform job information to be able to instruct subordinates Listening: to answer a phone to understand what subordinates say to grasp the contents of a meeting Reading: to be able to read office memo Others: to be sensitive	Lack of -effort to speak Japanese -understanding the Japanese way of thinking -effort to understand the Japanese society -Japanese language ability
B 3 years in Japan	Speaking: to be able to have a smooth relationship with the Japanese to be able to survive in a daily situation Listening: to answer a phone to grasp the contents of a meeting Reading: to understand a technical term to be able to read office memos to be able to read every-day-Kanji Others: to be able to keep with colleagues	Lack of -foreign language ability -understanding the Japanese corporate culture -information flow No exchange with Japanese colleague

By KISHIMOTO

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Japanese language ability expected by Japanese personnel officers

	A	B
SPEAKING	Businessmen / Engineer to be fluent to master the speech levels to be able handle daily conversation to be able to have a team work	to be able to speak perfectly to be able to entertain to be fluent on a job site
LISTENING	to be able to perform above items to be able to keep harmony	to be able to perform the above items
READING	to read office news letters to understand RINGISHO, office memos. technical terms	to read office documents to read 800 kanji to use a Kanji dictionary
WRITING	to handle telephone conversations to write business circulations to use a Japanese word processor to write office memos	to write speeches

By KISHIMOTO

Sample exercises from section 1 and 2.

JPN 306
総合商社－1

1．今日のビデオを見て分かったことを書きなさい。

2．次の質問に答えなさい。
1．牧場見学には、何でいきましたか？

2．三友商事が買う牧場について、分かったことを書きなさい。

3．なぜ改修をするのか？
そして改修には　どのくらい時間がかかるのか？

4．バーの様子を詳しく書きなさい。

5．このごろ牧場が良いのはなぜか？

JPN 306
総合商社 － 2

1．今日のビデオを見て、分かったことを話し合いましょう。

2．オフィスの様子をよく見てください。
様子を詳しく説明してください。

アメリカのと比べてみましょう。

3．植物園の様子をまとめてみましょう。

重役と課員の関係

4．香取さんは北野さんに何を勧めましたか？

あなたなら、どうしますか。

北野さんがどうするか考えてみましょう。

5．企画書が出ると、どうなりますか。

6．'時差は金なり'の意味を説明しなさい。

宿題　　稟議制度について調べなさい。
英語で構いません。

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

References

Toki, Satoshi
A Range of Aural Comprehension Practice
Nihonsokyoiku, March 1988

Sakuma, Katsuhiko
Requirements and Possibilities of Audio Visual Materials
Nihongo Kyoshu, March 1988

Tohsaku, Yasuhiko
Teaching Methods and Materials for the Development of Listening Comprehension
Nihongo Kyoiku, March 1988

J. V. Neustupny
Japanese Communicative Behavior and Japanese Language Teaching
Nihongo Kyoiku, March 1989

Ichikawa, Tomoko
Video of TV Programs as a Listening Comprehension Materials for Advanced - Level Japanese Students
Nihongo Kyoiku, March 1991

Nakayama, Akiko - McNeil, Ken
Utilizing to the Full of Potential for Interaction in the Language-Learning Classroom
Nihongo Kyoiku, March 1991

Sakai, Atsuko
Teaching Japanese Culture and Affair's - Questionnaire Method-
Nihongo Kyoiky, March 1991.

Kishimoto, Toshiko
Business Japanese--Needs and Direction
SEATJ Proceedings, 1992 (to be published)